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Agenda item 66

Question of Antarctica

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Carlos D. **Sorreta** (Philippines)

I. Introduction

1. The item entitled "Question of Antarctica" was included in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly in accordance with Assembly resolution 51/56 of 10 December 1996.

2. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 17 September 1999, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the First Committee.

3. At its 2nd meeting, on 23 September 1999, the First Committee decided to hold the general debate on the item, and to consider and take action on the draft resolution, from 10 to 12 November. The Committee considered, and took action on, the item at its 28th meeting, on 11 November (see A/C.1/54/PV.28).

4. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General (A/54/339);

(b) Letter dated 15 October 1999 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the communiqué of the meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held in New York on 23 September 1999 (A/54/469-S/1999/1063).

II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.58

5. At the 28th meeting, on 11 November, the Chairman of the Committee introduced a draft resolution entitled "Question of Antarctica" (A/C.1/54/L.58).

99-34679 (E) 171199

6. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.58 without a vote (see para. 7).

III. Recommendation of the First Committee

7. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Question of Antarctica

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 51/56 of 10 December 1996, in which it requested the Secretary-General to submit a report consisting of the information provided by the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties on their consultative meetings and on their activities in Antarctica, and on developments in relation to Antarctica,

Taking into account the debates on the question of Antarctica held since its thirty-eighth session,

Conscious of the particular significance of Antarctica to the international community, including for international peace and security, the global and regional environment, its effects on global and regional climate conditions, and scientific research,

Reaffirming that the management and use of Antarctica should be conducted in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and of promoting international cooperation for the benefit of mankind as a whole,

Recognizing that the Antarctic Treaty,[1] which provides, *inter alia*, for the demilitarization of the continent, the prohibition of nuclear explosions and the disposal of nuclear wastes, the freedom of scientific research and the free exchange of scientific information, is in furtherance of the purposes and principles of the Charter,

Welcoming the entry into force of the Madrid Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty on 14 January 1998, under which Antarctica has been designated as a natural reserve, devoted to peace and science, and the provisions contained in the Protocol regarding the protection of the Antarctic environment and dependent and associated ecosystems, including the need for environmental impact assessment in the planning and conduct of all relevant activities in Antarctica,

Welcoming the continuing cooperation among countries undertaking scientific research activities in Antarctica, which may help to minimize human impact on the Antarctic environment,

Welcoming also the increasing awareness of an interest in Antarctica shown by the international community, and convinced of the advantages to the whole of mankind of a better knowledge of Antarctica,

Reaffirming its conviction that, in the interest of all mankind, Antarctica should continue for ever to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and that it should not become the scene or object of international discord,

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 402, No. 5778.

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the question of Antarctica[2] and the role accorded by the Secretary-General to the United Nations Environment Programme in preparing his report and also of the Twenty-first, Twenty-second and Twenty-third Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings, which were held at Christchurch, New Zealand, from 19 to 30 May 1997, at Tromso, Norway, from 25 May to 5 June 1998, and at Lima, from 24 May to 4 June 1999, respectively;

2. *Recalls* the statement under chapter 17 of Agenda 21,[3] adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, that States carrying out research activities in Antarctica should, as provided for in article III of the Antarctic Treaty, continue:

(a) To ensure that data and information resulting from such research are freely available to the international community;

(b) To enhance the access of the international scientific community and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system to such data and information, including the encouragement of periodic seminars and symposia;

3. *Welcomes* the invitations to the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to attend Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings in order to assist such meetings in their substantive work, and urges the parties to continue to do so for future consultative meetings;

4. *Welcomes also* the practice whereby the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties regularly provide the Secretary-General with information on their consultative meetings and on their activities in Antarctica, and encourages the Parties to continue to provide the Secretary-General and interested States with information on developments in relation to Antarctica, and requests the Secretary-General to submit a report which shall consist of that information to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session;

5. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-seventh session the item entitled "Question of Antarctica".

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[2] A/54/339.

[3] See *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference*, resolution I, annex II, chap. 17, para. 17.105.